



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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December 21, 2000

To: [REDACTED]

Thru: Daron R. Haddock, Permit Supervisor *DRH*

From: Paul Baker, Reclamation Biologist *PB*
Wayne Western, Reclamation Engineer *WW*
Bill Malencik, Inspector

Re: Technical Field Visit to the Mudwater Canyon Fan Portal, Plateau Mining Corporation, Star Point Mine, [REDACTED]

Other Attendees: Johnny Pappas and several others from Plateau Mining Corp.
Jeff DeFreest, U.S. Forest Service

Date & Time: November 1, 2000, 8:00 to 11:00 A.M.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the visit was to look at the remote fan portal in Mudwater Canyon. We wanted to see what difficulties would be encountered in trying to backfill the highwall and blend the disturbed area with the surrounding area.

OBSERVATIONS:

There was about a foot of snow on the ground. The operator hopes to reclaim the area this fall, but reclamation may be difficult. We discussed this problem with the operator's representatives, and they agreed it may be necessary to postpone reclamation until next spring. The only way to get equipment to the site is through the mine, and it is becoming harder to ventilate the mine. The fan at Mudwater Canyon is in need of repairs, and the operator does not want to spend the money to make the repairs. The only other possibility is to ventilate the mine with a temporary fan at the main portals. The operator intends to keep the Mudwater fan going as long as possible, seal about two-thirds of the mine, install the temporary fan, dismantle the Mudwater fan, and remove the scrap through the mine.

Because of the snow, seeing what fill is available was difficult. The portal was built in the early 1970's, so no topsoil was salvaged. It appeared most of the cut material was pushed

straight out from the portals and over the edge (Figure 1). Unlike Corner Canyon where disturbance was limited to the immediate area around the three portals with no disturbance between them, the portal areas and everything between was disturbed (Figures 2 and 3).

A bedrock ledge is just below the level of the portals. This limits the amount of fill that can be scraped from the pad itself. Because the operator is not able to bring in a track hoe and will only be using a D-3 dozer (Figure 4) with a small backhoe attachment (Figure 6), it is very difficult to bring up the fill from below the edge of the pad. At a minimum, the operator intends to cover the coal seam four feet deep and to be sure there is no portal structure visible from the surface. Beyond this, the highwalls will be backfilled as much as possible.

Originally, the site had five active portals, but two have been sealed and partially backfilled (Figure 5). We were not able to see exactly where these portals were.

The Mudwater Canyon portals are near the bottom of a canyon, and on the other side of the canyon, also very close to the bottom, is an old abandoned portal (Figure 6). This is clearly not a site the Division is regulating under Title V. There is fill in this portal about twenty feet back from the entrance (Figure 7), and there are some log supports near the entrance. The portal is partly fenced and partly open (Figure 8). The operator is willing to put fill in the portal to close it better but is concerned that they do not want to be responsible for successful reclamation of this area. The Division is concerned that any fill used in backfilling the portal would not be available for backfilling the highwall. We agreed to discuss this with our supervisors.

Douglas fir, elderberry, aspen, and snowberry seedlings are being stored in a building by the fan. If these are not used this fall, they need to be protected under a layer of mulch, such as straw or shredded paper. If not planted this fall, the Douglas fir seedlings will probably not survive because they need water through the winter.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS:

Personnel from the Division agreed to discuss reclamation of the abandoned portal with their supervisors.

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Attachment: (FV_110100A)
cc: Johnny Pappas, Plateau Mining
Jeff DeFreest, USFS
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PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1



Figure 2

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 3



Figure 4

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 5

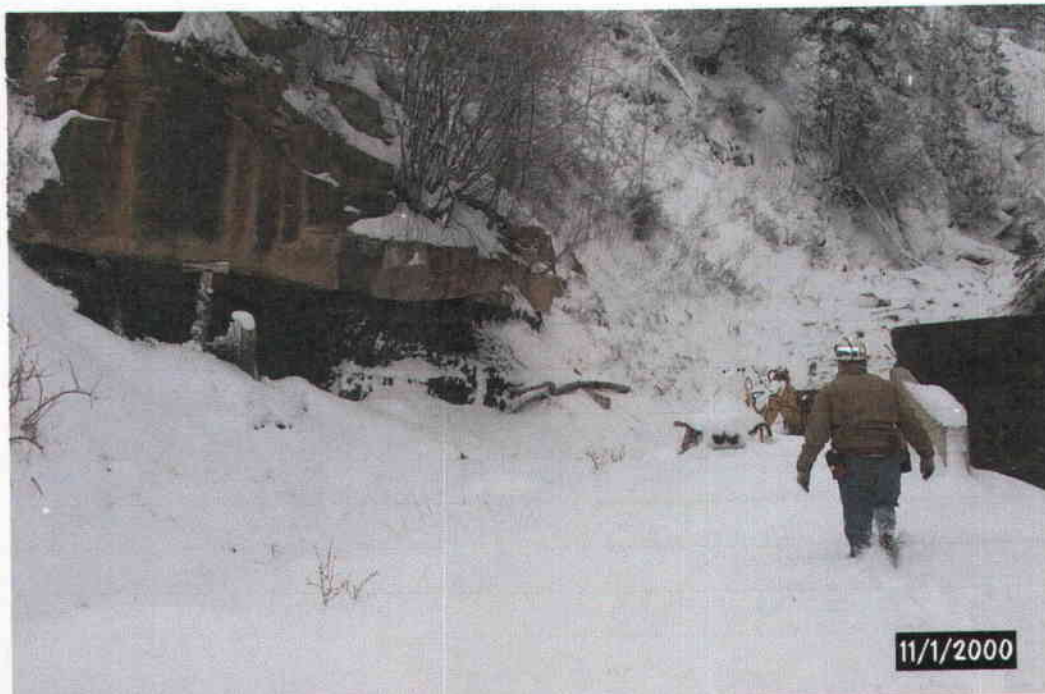


Figure 6

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 7



Figure 8